CHARLOTTE WILSON-HAMMOND

Landscape with Thighs

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

Central Guaranty Trust Gallery in Memory of Henry B Rhude (1)

22 June – 8 September 2002

Curated by Peter Dykhuis with essays by Sarah Hollenberg and John Murchie

Art Gallery *of* Nova Scotia

Charlotte Wilson-Hammond:
Landscape with Thighs

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ISBN 088871-743-1

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Published by the
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
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Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3C8

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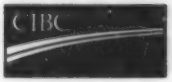

Gratefully acknowledging the support of
The Canada Council for the Arts

With assistance from Eastbridge
Consulting Inc., and John Snow.

Photography: Morrow Scot-Brown
Personal photographs provided by the artist
Design: Semaphor Design, Steven Slipp
Colour separations: Maritime Digital Colour
Printing: Print Atlantic

Front cover:
1. *Nude #1*, 1969-72, oil on canvas

Back cover:
30. *Surfacing* (detail) 2002
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on canvas

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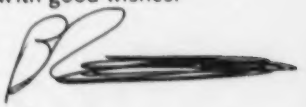
Charlotte Wilson-Hammond moved to Nova Scotia in 1971 and in no time in the ensuing 30 years has she been anything less than a force to be reckoned with in the Nova Scotia arts community. Charlotte is a founding member of Eye Level Gallery, a founding member of Visual Arts Nova Scotia, a founding member of the Nova Scotia Coalition of Arts and Culture and the creator of the Clam Harbour Sandcastle and Sculpture competition. The boards which she has been a member include those of CARFAC, the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, VisArt Copyright Inc., the Nova Scotia Talent Trust and AGNS. But throughout all her years of organizing to support the arts, Charlotte has also maintained her career in the arts. Her exhibition record stretches back to 1969 with solo and group shows across Canada and abroad. Her work is included in many public collections, including the AGNS Permanent Collection, and we are honoured to be hosting *Landscape With Thighs* in the Central Guaranty Trust Gallery in Memory of Henry B. Rhude (1), a much deserved retrospective of one of this province's premiere artists.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Peter Dykhuis, the guest curator of this exhibition, to John Murchie and Sarah Hollenberg for their essays, to Ray Cronin, AGNS Curator of Contemporary Art for coordinating all aspects of this exhibition, and to all the AGNS staff who assisted in making it a reality, through their hard work and dedication in fulfilling our mission of bringing art and people together. We owe a special note of gratitude to our sponsor, CIBC, and to our supporters, Eastbridge Consulting Inc. and John Snow for their financial assistance. Finally, thank you to The Canada Council for the Arts for their continued vision and support of AGNS contemporary programming.

With good wishes.



BERNARD RIORDON
Director

102-06754/

TIST'S STATEMENT

In 2001 I celebrated with my family and community thirty years of living in Clam Harbour as well as my sixtieth birthday. It was an amazing event and hard to believe that the time has passed so quickly. When we first moved here a trip to Halifax was quite an undertaking and always an adventure, what with dirt roads and no 100 series highway! Now we seem to dash in and out of Halifax at the drop of a hat.

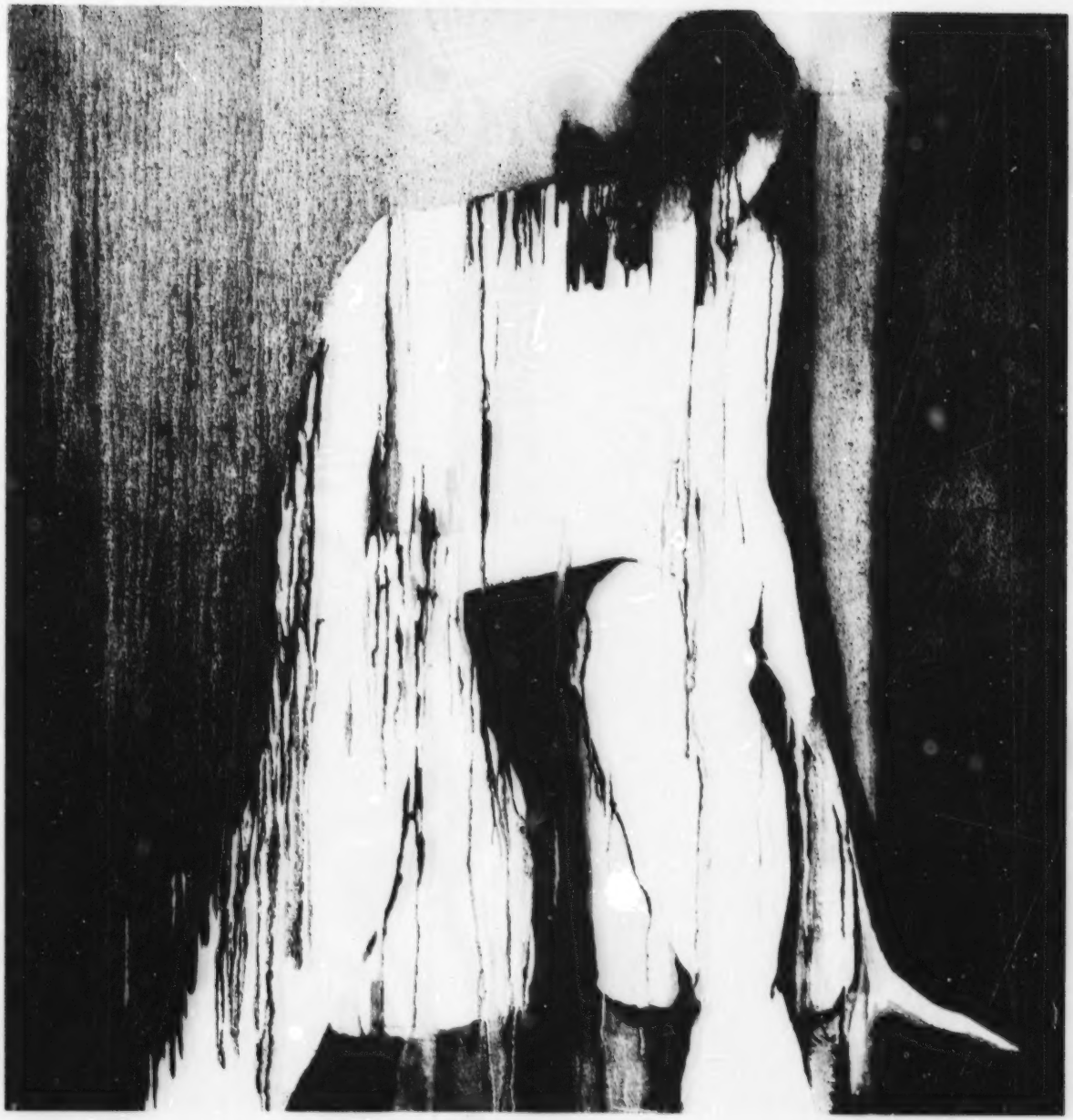
The Eastern Shore accepted us—weird hippies that we were—and I want to thank our community for their caring, support, and the inspiration that has informed my work over the years. I also want to thank my family, and in particular my husband Gordon, for his generosity of spirit and belief in what I do. Living with an artist isn't easy and Gordon does it with incredible grace.

Working with Peter Dykhuis has been a joy. I've had lots of fun and I want to thank him for his patience, humour, and insight, and his trips to the studio in blinding rain and mud!

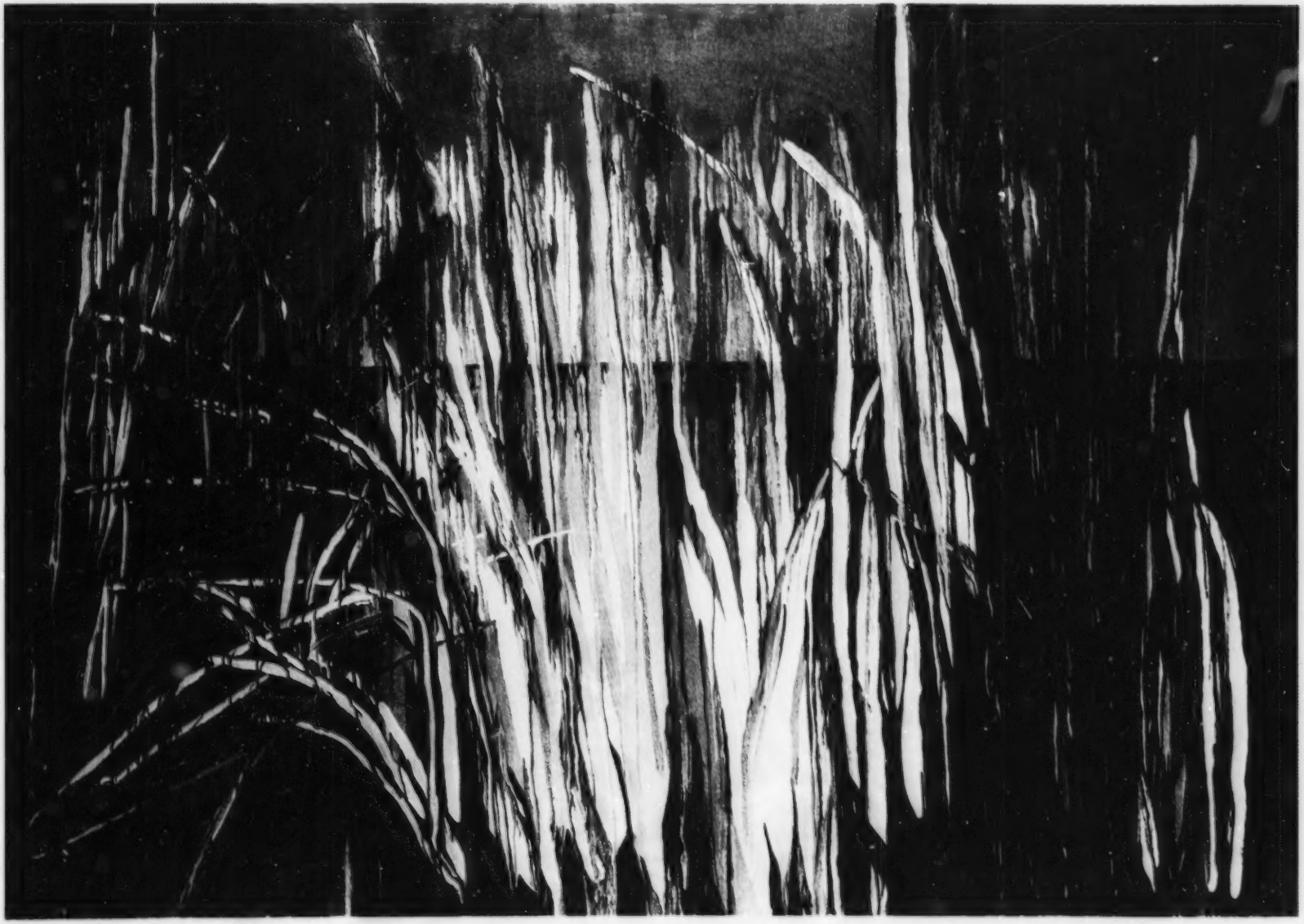
As well, I would like to acknowledge Ray Cronin, the hard working staff at the AGNS and finally Bernie Riordon's generous support.

–CWH

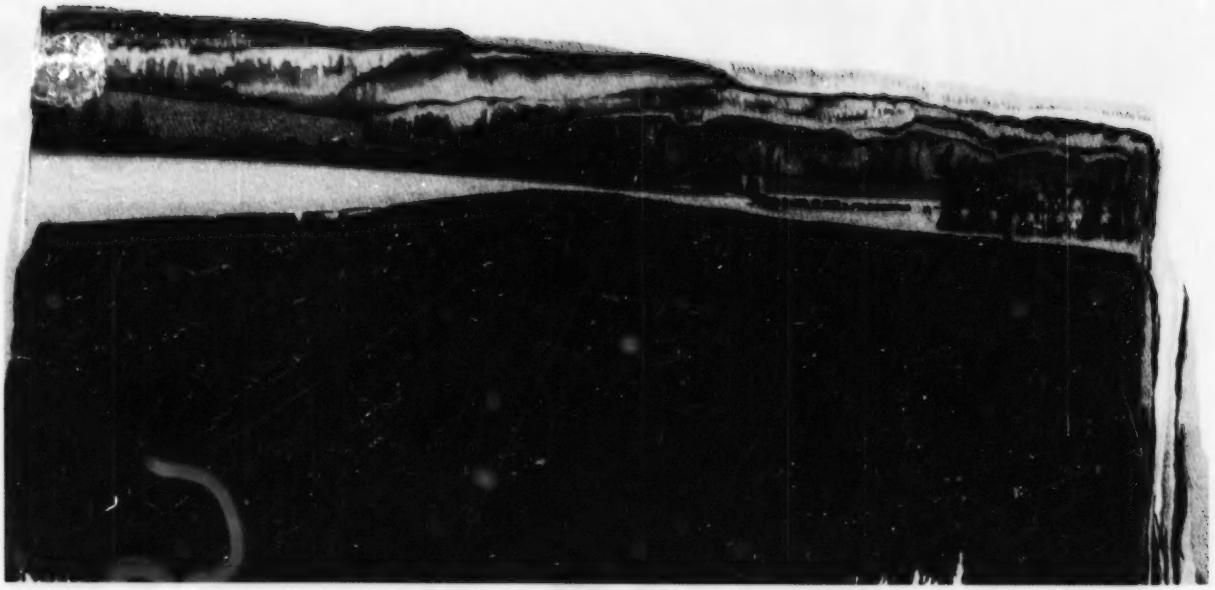
12 *Dune Clam Harbour #4*, 1981



2. *Nude #2* 1969-72



4. *Beach Grass* 1976



© CHARLOTTE WILSON-HAMMOND

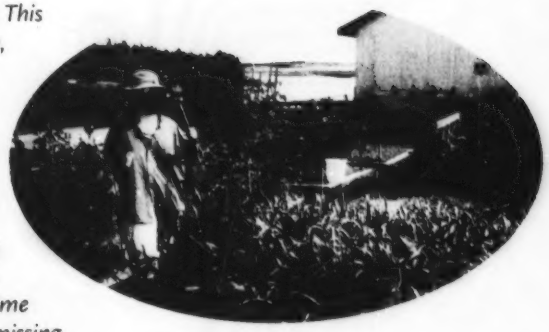
7. *Diamond Field* 1980

Charlotte Wilson-Hammond *Landscape with Thighs*

Peter Dykhuis

Retrospectives. Overviews. Catalogue essays that lead to summations laden with grand insights. That is what is expected from me, the curator, when producing an exhibition such as this. But how am I to begin discussing Charlotte's life and career to date? There is much to talk about starting, obviously, with the extensive body of work that she has produced over the decades. Just as significant is the history of Charlotte's contributions to Nova Scotia's cultural life as a founding member of an artist-run centre (Eye Level Gallery), was a participant in the process of instigating two public cultural support agencies (the Nova Scotia Coalition on Arts and Culture plus Visual Arts Nova Scotia) as well as one of the longest serving members of the Board of Governors for the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (1985-2000). Charlotte has also served on the boards and executives of two national agencies (Canadian Artists Representation and the Canadian Conference of the Arts) plus there is her contribution to the pop-cultural life of Nova Scotia as the founder and for ten years (1978 – 1988) the chief organizer of the annual Clam Harbour Sand Castle and Sculpture Competition, an event that attracts thousands of visitors to a weekend of sand-sculpting fun on the beach adjacent to her home property.

Charlotte's relationship to her family must also enter the picture. Although not often subject matter within her work, she freely acknowledges that her 'career' has evolved and devolved in tandem with the intensity of her parenting responsibilities. This only makes sense when considering how Charlotte, as a woman on the front-lines of first-generation feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, needed to pragmatically intertwine her creative career interests with her commitment as a mother to her children, to Gordon her partner, as well as to the house, gardens, and livestock that defined and continue to shape her life. Issues of parenting seldom emerge in the biographies of male artists, yet, in a highly competitive career environment, time devoted to parenting, often manifesting itself as 'missing years' on a curriculum vitae, is often read as a liability for women in the visual arts world. Ironically, it is only within the past few decades when the mother-child relationship is used as investigative subject matter, as with Mary Kelly's 'Post-partum Document', that the child-bearing and nurturing female is critically considered.



So how do I speak about Charlotte and her work? I want to tell a full story. In academically cool Modernist traditions, only the art works would be discussed as though they were produced in a bloodless, clinical and emotionally detached environment that did not intersect with the realities of finding studio time while raising children and taking care of a small farm. Likewise, it is also incorrect to read

1941–1963

Personal History

- 1941: born in Montreal, PQ.
- 1943: father died suddenly in Toronto.
- raised in New York, Buenos Aires, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary.
- 1961: married to Allen Harrington, moved to Bloomington, Indiana.
- 1962: birth of Geoffry Harrington.

Education and selected related professional activities

- painted and drew voraciously as a child.
- 1953: took painting classes in Montreal with Eric Goldberg.
- visited the Art Gallery of Toronto often as a teenager while living in Toronto.

artworks as though they are mere illustrations of what transpired in the personal life of an artist. Instead, I support a curatorial practice where there is a blend of issues to be read in the bundled relationships between an artist's studio practice and a life filled with economic, social and domestic realities. I will, therefore, speak in two voices, one informal and chatty like this when discussing Charlotte's personal life and my perceptions of how it impacted on her creative process, then in another voice that is formally analytic. For good measure and to best describe Charlotte's life, I've also added a multi-tiered time line at the bottom of this text that maps out a few of the layers within Charlotte's life. Trusting that you are smart readers, I believe that this 'time line' will graphically tell a much larger story that I am capable of even if I had thousands of words at my disposal.

Curatorial projects are also creative constructions in their own right. Decisions are made about which works are included in an exhibition and those that are not. With the advantage of hindsight and a firm knowledge of what is currently important in Charlotte's studio practice, this exhibition strategically lines up specific bodies of work to create a visual argument for the relationship between Charlotte's early paintings of nude female bodies and her on-going and current interest in work that is rooted in the experience of the landscape that she inhabits.

* * * * *

Born in Montreal, Quebec, in 1941, Charlotte Wilson received her elementary and secondary education in schools in Toronto and Calgary. After meeting Allen Harrington, a ski-instructor in Vermont, Wilson and Harrington were married in 1961 followed by the birth of their son Geoffry in 1962. The young family located in Bloomington, Indiana where Harrington was enrolled in a Graduate Psychology program at the University of Indiana. From 1964 and 1965, Wilson attended classes in the University's undergraduate fine arts program. Their second son, Kenneth, was born in 1965 but Harrington and Wilson divorced shortly after due to irreconcilable differences.

A single mother with two young sons, Wilson moved back to Canada, choosing to live in Toronto. Her initial residence was located in a government subsidized apartment complex in an area of North York known as Don Mills. Enrolled at the Three Schools of Art, Wilson continued to pursue her fine arts interests from 1966 to 1968. During this period, she studied with Dennis Burton, Gershon Iskowitz and Robert Markle but was also influenced heavily by the semi-erotic paint-encrusted figurative work of Graham Coughtry. In order to stay afloat economically, Wilson was employed as a secretary for the Three Schools, taught drawing classes at the West End YMCA and also modeled for life classes at the Ontario College of Art where she learned much about being 'subject matter' for other artists' projects. Prompted by Vera Frankel, a close friend of Wilson at the time, she scraped together a down payment for a house on Macpherson Avenue that was purchased for a mere $25,000 in 1966.

Gordon Hammond, an adventurous young man from Britain, entered Wilson's life in 1968. Coming to Canada for Expo '67, Hammond had traveled across Canada before settling in Toronto. Hammond attended a few of Wilson's drawing classes and the two became friends. A few years junior to Wilson, Hammond also took care of her sons Geoffry and Kenneth while Wilson continued her hectic life as a single mother. Eventually Wilson and Hammond became romantically involved and moved in together in 1969, marrying shortly after. Their daughter, Thea, was born in 1970.

The period from 1965 to 1972 was one of cultural awakening in Toronto. Known for its strict Victorian heritage and conservative social milieu, Toronto was often derisively named 'Hogtown' due to the number of abattoirs that were within smelling distance of the downtown. But the social changes of the late 1960s changed that. Yorkville became a counter-culture hangout of clubs and coffee houses for the new class of hippies and 'freaks' that emerged. Rochdale, a high-rise housing project affiliated with the University of Toronto, was legendary for its drug-culture and chemical 'incidents.' Anti Vietnam War and anti-establishment

1964 – 1965

Personal History

- **1965: birth of Kenneth Wilson-Harrington; divorced Allen Harrington shortly after; relocated to Toronto, ON.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **undergraduate fine art studies, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.**
- **Read feminine mysteries and other texts, developed early feminist interests.**

protests also defined this period. New galleries were opening, free-love and free expression were in the air. People went to artschool not for degrees and four-year programs but for the 'experience'. This was the context that Wilson and Hammond lived in. And in this environment, Wilson-Hammond both developed her skills as an artist working from life models as well as working as a model herself. When deciding to use her own body as subject matter for new paintings, it was photographs taken of her by Gordon Hammond that were her original source material.

As a woman navigating through the macho urban waters patrolled by Burton, Markle and Coughtry, Wilson-Hammond did join with them in turning her gaze towards the female body as subject matter but countered her mentors with a budding feminist point of view by employing, in 1970, her own pregnant body as her 'model' and subject matter. Her gaze was set on herself, her insights intended for personal scrutiny and psychological investigation not just the semi-erotic consumption of the male gaze as witnessed in the intentionally provocative work produced by Burton and Markle from this period. Wilson-Hammond's nudes represented powerful bodies of women with strong hips and thighs wreathed in vertical runs of liquid paint that alluded to the reality of female menstrual cycles and bodily secretions of women and nursing mothers. The female figures in her work, faceless and not identifiable as Wilson-Hammond as subject matter, take on the quality of 'every-woman' but distanced through aggressive veils of paint streaks.

* * * * *

I have no idea what it is like to experience the world from a woman's body. It is difficult to understand what it would feel like to be young and the object of sexual desire channelled through lecherous male gazes. Yet much of Western art history is filled with examples of this very objectification of women and much contemporary Feminist analysis has been brought forward to critically locate and disarm this process. Sarah Hollenberg, in a later essay, discusses this issue in depth from the point of view of a critically aware painter and writer who has recently graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

I moved to the Queen Street West district of Toronto in 1978 as a young man fresh out of an art program from a mid-western American college. This was an interesting time to arrive in Toronto; the art scene was moving downtown into the warehouse district and my new friends were opening new artist-run centres such as YYZ and Mercer Union. I never personally knew Burton, Markle or Coughtry but knew of their work and observed some of them from afar. Burton's paintings, particularly the fetish-oriented 'Garterbelt' series, best defined these senior artists as, in my opinion, the horny old dinosaur guys who had no sensitivity towards women or understanding of new critical feminist issues. Although we in the emerging artist-run culture were only one generation away from these men, we felt, sometimes smugly, as though we were light-years ahead of them in critical thought.

* * * * *

Observing Wilson-Hammond's paintings of her naked body from 1968 – 1972, one realizes how unusual it must have been at the time for a woman to author provocative images of female nudes. Wilson-Hammond owned her body; it was her subject matter to manipulate and interpret as needed. Granted, she mimicked Coughtry's painting strategies by letting gravity draw liquid paint down over her representations of flesh, a device that problematized the traditional 'figure/ground' relationship between the image depicted and the background it emerged from. Coughtry's images, though, were often of sexually intertwined couples, the viscous fluidity of the paint a blatant reference to sweat and sexual fluids. Wilson-Hammond's nudes, on the other hand, are of strong solo female figures influenced by the drawings and sculptures of Henry Moore, displayed as characters constructed as landscape. They still refer, however, to the historical tradition of the passive 'reclining nude' with the exceptional twist that the author was female. The image wasn't new or radical but the 'authorization' of it staked out new critical territory, to use a

1966 – 1968

Personal History

- 1966: purchased a house on MacPherson Avenue in Toronto.
- 1968: met Gordon Hammond.

Education and selected related professional activities

- enrolled at Three Schools of Art, Toronto, studied with Dennis Burton, Robert Markle and Gershon Iskowitz.
- worked as a secretary for Three Schools, taught drawing classes at the YMCA.

geographical metaphor to link body to land.

Based on encouragement from Nova Scotian artists James B 'Sandy' Spencer and John Greer, Wilson-Hammond, along with partner Gordon and their three children, moved from Toronto in 1972 to Clam Harbour on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. Their house in Toronto was sold for $40,000, and a small hotel with 200 acres of land overlooking the sea was purchased for $14,000. This relocation, however, was not a simple shift from one province to another. Rather, this move represented a flight from the bustle of a metropolitan urban environment to the solitude of a pastoral, rural existence by the sea. This radical shift, still associated with the 'back-to-the-land' hippie idealism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, also represented a major social shift since urban supermarkets, neighbourhood services, social night-life and professional venues of public galleries were traded in for a hard-working life of self-sustaining subsistence from farming, gardening, fishing and heating from wood-fired stoves. Indeed, to this day, Wilson-Hammond still uses a massive, antique wood stove as her chief kitchen appliance. One must also step around the roving bands of curious free-range chickens, guarded warily by an elderly and gently patronizing rooster, on route to Wilson-Hammond's loft studio in her barn that overlooks Clam Harbour and the nearby fields populated by the family's sheep and horses.

Wilson-Hammond's *'Nudes'* are the foundational paintings in this exhibition since they represent the carry-over of imagistic concerns from her formative years in Toronto. Of major interest is how Wilson-Hammond's residence within her new landscape also, one might say inevitably, influenced her painting practice as the views of Clam Harbour and its environs became her subject matter. By 1977 with her exhibition entitled *The Clam Harbour Collection* curated by Mary MacLachlan for the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, the paint-dripped lines of shoulders, breasts and thighs that delineated the literal 'figure' from its painted ground, were mutated into horizon lines, curving fields, breaker waves and high-tide marks of Wilson-Hammond's new landscape.

The 'figure' of the body becomes the 'ground' of the landscape. Perhaps this is too simple an equation but representational issues in painting perpetually need to negotiate an image's content with its construction strategies. Perhaps in this simplicity of construction is a complex weave of layered references.

* * * * *

Gravity and water. The nude and the landscape paintings are each defined by the downward pull of paint across the canvas. In each case, the paint was applied in a semi-fluid state so that gravity could affect it's outcome and final placement. The paint records the trail of this pull. Charlotte is the choreographer of these movements; she controls the start of the process, allows 'nature' to have it's way with the paint-body but ultimately edits her paint applications in and out of the composition. Perhaps the key here is a striving for balance between Charlotte's intellect, gravity and her editorial control of the process.

Many painters begin new work with a clear understanding of what the final work will look like. At the risk of oversimplifying the issues, permit me to say that for these painters it is almost a matter of illustrating the phantom memory/image within the artist's consciousness. Other painters 'find' their image through material pursuits in the studio environment. Of course I'm presenting these scenarios as production oppositions while the reality often will lie somewhere in the middle. But Charlotte's work appears to be about these production balances and games with the laws of gravity.

Charlotte also inhabits her subject matter in a very direct manner. With her nudes, she uses images of her own body as the starting point for the work. The landscapes that she painted in the Clam Harbour Collection were her landscapes, her vistas, her neighbouring beaches. Her nudes are not portraits, the landscapes are not detailed representations of geo-specific locations. Instead, they are

1969 – 1972

Personal History

- **1969: married to Gordon Hammond, traveled to England to meet his parents.**
- **1970: birth of Thea Wilson-Hammond.**
- **1972: moved to Clam Harbour, NS after purchasing small hotel and 200 acres of land.**
- **1972 – 1974: with Gordon and other community members, fought land expropriation by the proposed Ship Harbour National Park, featured on Adrienne Clarkson's CBC television show *Take 30*.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **modeled for life classes at the Ontario College of Art.**

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

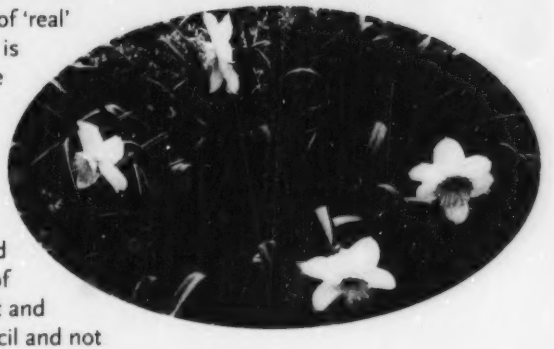
- **1969 – 1971: group shows with gallery artists, Aggregation Gallery, Toronto, ON.**

painted interpretations of bodies and lands, ones that start from specific places but are woven through streaks of paint that harass the picture plane and self-consciously interfere with the imagistic construction. After all, this is a painted, interpretive representation, not a photograph or an austere scientific recording. Painting has its own politic and reason for being.

* * * * *

In 1980, Wilson-Hammond produced a series of paintings for *Land and Sea – Viewpoints of Prince Edward Island*, organized by the Confederation Centre Gallery and Museum in Charlottetown, that were from a geography other than her familiar Clam Harbour. In this series, roads, plowed fields of red dirt and rolling pastoral vistas were manifested with similar painting techniques where controlled drips and stains were foundational devices in her construction of landscape images.

In many ways, *Landscape with Thighs* is a sequel to a curatorial project entitled *Naked/Nude* originally developed by Susan Gibson Garvey in 1990 for the AGNS. In that exhibition, another selection of Wilson-Hammond's episodes of figurative work were foregrounded and contextually integrated into her practice of landscape painting. Gibson Garvey effectively analyzed how Wilson-Hammond's landscapes shared spatial relationships with her images of the 'nude' human body and how both imagistic interests were imbued with Wilson-Hammond's emerging feminist positions. This exhibition, *Landscape with Thighs*, begins with Wilson-Hammond's early figurative work, and traces the dissolution of her figures into landscape idioms in the early 1980s. *Naked/Nude* ends with Wilson-Hammond's *Shadow/Rock* series of 1988 where the shadow of hands and naked figures are drafted onto curvaceous rocky terrain. Although Wilson-Hammond produced a few series of figure works in the 1980s, all documented in *Naked/Nude*, it is the integration of both figurative and the landscape interests that is significant in the *Shadow/Rock* series and, therefore, their pivotal inclusion in this exhibition.



In reality, though, it is not representations of 'real' figures that are located within the landscape. It is the shadow of hands and naked figures that are cast on the immediate ground. Gone are the distant views to horizon lines at sea or the pastoral topography of Prince Edward Island. The shadows are visually flat representations of figures with no characteristics to indicate who the shadow-maker is. The detail is reserved for the rocky ground in the immediate vicinity of the shadowed author. These works are also soft and subtle in colouration, executed in coloured pencil and not subject to the intense palette and gravitational forces of the previous paintings on canvas.

* * * * *

I like Charlotte's (forgive the pun) cheeky humour in her work. I sense a ribald sexual exuberance that pervades her Nudes. *The figures may mimic the demure, reclining 'objects of male desire' as read throughout previous eras of Western art history but these figures are also self-confidently sexually charged. The drips, the viscous paint are all signifiers of this. The* Shadow/Rock *works, though, are also playfully sexual even though there are no details on the figure. It is the rounded, buttock and breast-like rocks that stand in as surrogate body parts. The crevices and curvaceous spaces between the rocks, in tandem, play their roles in the same sexualized micro-drama—a Rorschach test of cracks and orifices if one wants to take it to extremes.*

* * * * *

In the early 1990s, Wilson-Hammond began a new body of work that resulted in the complete abandonment of any horizon line and three-dimensional perspective. Culminating with her 1995 exhibition entitled *Intimate Communion* curated by Gordon Laurin for the Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, this body of work, was, literally, rooted in Wilson-Hammond's gardening activities. With

1973 – 1974

Personal History

- 1974: won the fight against land expropriation, helped to create a system of Provincial Parks on the Eastern Shore.
- 1974: grandmother died.
- 1974: favorite Jersey cow died.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1974 – 1976: Founding Member and Board Member, Eye Level Gallery.
- 1974: Founding Member, Scotia East Arts Society.
- 1974 – 1977: taught painting classes on Eastern Shore.
- joined CARFAC, fought for artist's fees for public exhibitions; boycotted St. Mary's University Art Gallery.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1973: exhibited at World's Fair, Osaka, Japan.
- 1974 – 1980: group shows with gallery artists, Zwicker's Gallery, Halifax, NS.

16. *Shadows Rock Lichens* 1988

1975 – 1976

Personal History

- Ken and Geoff star in Ernest Buckler documentary for Adrienne Clarkson and the CBC.
- Thea gets first pony.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1976 - 1980: Founding Member and Board Member, Visual Arts Nova Scotia.
- 1976: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1975: *Arrival*, Zwicker's Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1975: *Some Nova Scotia Women Artists*, group show, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1976: *Graphics Atlantic*, group show, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1976: exhibited at XXIst Olympiad, Montreal, PQ.

the *Shadow/Rock* series, the represented figures were imagistically conforming to the surface topography of the land. The work from *Intimate Communion* was derived from Wilson-Hammond's presence in her garden toiling with the soil through annual cycles of plowing, planting, weeding and harvesting. But no figurative elements are present and no horizon line is indicated. Instead, the works, assembled in gridded panel groups of three by three, two by six, four by four, are painted material armatures embedded with organic souvenirs of grass and straw that have a full one-to-one scale representation within her new framework. The grid structure of each work alludes to the order imposed on the land through gardening as well as the grid of calendars and the cycle of seasons. The earth at our feet is open to scrutiny and becomes poetic subject matter for Wilson-Hammond's paintings. The organic 'real' grass and straw are frozen in paint encrusted sweeps across the panels referring to flows of wind, the claw of the rake and the orderly mayhem of the spade and roto-tiller. As with gravity in the early paintings, a different form of 'nature' becomes an active ingredient within these works.

* * * * *

Sarah Hollenberg and I drove to Charlotte's place for a studio visit at the end of February. It was insanely blustery from an intense, deep, low pressure that was traversing up the Atlantic seaboard. Much of the snow cover was gone but was replaced with mucky dirt further agitated by sideways rain. We had lunch in the cozy warmth of Charlotte's house. Glancing out over the yard, I saw her raised garden beds, flat and bleak from the weight of recent snow and now the sandblasting wind and rain. But there it was... the grid from Intimate Communion. *The raised planting beds were neatly organized in a grid pattern across the yard, virtually illustrating the structural template within her paintings. How come it took multiple visits over the years for me to make this very literal connection to her work?*

This is always the conundrum when reading an artist's production. How far does one go in connecting the results of studio practice with the evident and physical surroundings of the artist? What is important and what merely becomes intellectual diversions for curators to mess around with? Yet I am convinced of the richness of clues and entry points into Charlotte's work that can be found within her daily, lived environment. In the small catalogue for her exhibition entitled rtü *which was initially mounted at ArtsPlace in Annapolis Royal, I wrote a multi-voiced text as well that spoke about Charlotte's rural existence by the sea. The chorus in the text declared, "The tide comes in, the tide goes out' referring to natural forces and the cycles of life as evidenced through gardening, the birth of lambs and the very free ranging chickens that prowled the perimeter of the property. The work emerges around the word 'rtü' which, in Sanskrit, is referential to lunar cycle of female menstruation. Indeed, the root of the English word 'ritual' is from* 'rtü'. *Again Charlotte alludes to issues beyond the scope of my male experience. Lunar cycles and daily tides. The pull of gravitational forces on earth's bodies of water, the cycles of ovulation and, without the penetration by sperm, the gravitational pull of blood and water as the dormant egg and uterine wall is sloughed of. This is all part of Charlotte's lurking agenda within this body of dark-red painted paper constructions.*

The cycles circle outward, though. Charlotte has become the post-menopausal grandmother. It should come as no surprise that rtü *was produced in the years during which Charlotte's daughter, Thea, become a mother for the first time. The life cycle continues through the blood and life of her blood and life.*

* * * * *

When discussing her 1999 project *rtü*, Wilson-Hammond's material point of view came from beneath the surface of the earth from a psychological subterranean space inhabited by what she calls 'the ageless voices of women.' While avoiding the end-game of essentialized 'earth-goddess' feminism, Wilson-

1977 – 1978

Personal History

- busy with children, gardens, animals and studio work.
- traveled to Toronto for opening of exhibition at Gallery Dresdnere.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1977: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.
- 1978 - 1988: creator/coordinator of Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle and Sculpture Festival.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1977 - 1978: *Clam Harbour Collection*, organized by Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS; toured to: Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown, PEI; Memorial University Art Gallery, St. John's, NFLD.
- 1978: *Clam Harbour Collection II*, Gallery Dresdnere, Toronto, ON.
- 1978: *4th Dalhousie Drawing Exhibition*, group show, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.

landscape and the cultivation of her gardens with the experience of inhabiting her female body. Whereas *Intimate Communion*, also rife with ritualistic and personal overtones, was seriously gridded in format, the paper and gel medium pieces of *rtü* are dramatically unsquare and also single-unit pieces unto themselves. But until she began this series of work, all of Wilson-Hammond's surfaces were physically and visually taut as stretched canvases and squared panels. The works in *Intimate Communion*, however, did build a surface topography not previously seen in the physically flat canvas and paper works prior to these. All of the works in *rtü* are bumpy and flexible material extrapolations and extensions of what was begun with *Intimate Communion*. Paint and gel medium are embedded into crinkled paper as part of the foundational material structure of each piece. As well, references to bone and muscle take the viewer below the surface of skin but also beneath the surface of the earth. Wilson-Hammond freely speaks of an allusion to bodies, living and dead, that are layered into terra firma.

Wilson-Hammond's newest series of works are similar in format to *rtü* but have a very opposite palette of blues, purples and greens. Assembled on multiple and uniquely-sized canvas stretchers, *Surfacing* represents a fusion of material practices from both *rtü* and *Intimate Communion*. The stretched canvas is in use again as a foundational starting point but the papers, gel medium, inks and paints applied to it are directly from the construction process of *rtü*. The individual panels are also installed in clusters and, for the installation of *Landscape with Thighs*, form a community of images that collectively operate as a single painting installation. The strict grid of *Intimate Communion* is gone but is replaced by a casual organization where images migrate up and down and along the wall as per Wilson-Hammond's desire.

* * * * *

It's the blue. Call me semiotically challenged if you want, but I can't help but associate the new works with water. Charlotte's point of view in rtü *was from underneath the soil and from inside the female body. This new work feels as though one is taken underwater, in some cases replicating the view of looking up toward ripples and sunlight from beneath the surface.*

But I am perhaps reading this too literally. Most of Charlotte's work has elements that defy simple imagistic associations. Although as an artist she is often readable as the purveyor of images and poetic associations to 'real' life, Charlotte also adds elements to her work that spoil simple binary readings. Sometimes paint, gel, ink and paper are agents of mischief in her work serving to confound an image with drips and paint runs to always remind the viewer that it is only materials that they are looking at. The crinkled papers have an organic 'nature' unto themselves. In counterpoint, the sea grass stuck to the surfaces are no longer 'nature' but a paint-encrusted souvenir of something long disenfranchised from the soil and, instead, mummified into another form of cultural cultivation. But that is what I like about Charlotte's work. It is very specific about its imagistic roots but wide open and evocative in terms of other associations that can be read into the work.

* * * * *

Landscape and the land as subject matter, then, is the key curatorial thread in this exhibition. Reading Wilson-Hammond's curriculum vitae, however, one finds listings of exhibitions and projects produced in the 1980s that deal with other subject matters and commissioned interests. There are shaped flower paintings, realistic graphite portraits of naked men, commissioned works for the movie *Life Classes* and collaborative video projects. Susan Gibson Garvey's essay in the catalogue for *Naked/Nude* marvelously tracks how these projects weave through Wilson-Hammond's practice during this time period. But as illustrated

979 – 1980

Personal History

- 1979: Gordon established his own company, Atlantex, worked in back room of residence.
- 1979: Geoff moved to Toronto to pursue undergraduate studies at University of Toronto.
- 1980: summer spent traveling in old van with Felicity Redgrave in Prince Edward Island.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1979 – 1980: became Chairperson, Visual Arts Nova Scotia.
- 1979: cover and feature article in ArtsAtlantic.
- 1979 – 1980: Canada Council Visiting Artist Grant.
- 1980: Artist in Residence, Holland College, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.
- 1980: Chairperson, Canada Council Review Committee.

h Landscape with Thighs, Wilson-Hammond's key interests
ce 1990 has been in images and associations with the land and
rth, works not with a view to a horizon but mixed media
nstructions and paintings that describe the earth's surface and
usions to layers beneath the visible scape.

Since 1990, the physical surfaces within most work by Wilson-
ammond, then, describe and echo the surfaces of the earth.
ass, dirt, and sediments constructed in her work operate as the
ntact points between what is optically visible and what is
nbedded. The surface of the earth, both ground and water, then,
the skin of the landscape. Wilson-Hammond describes these
ins, the membranes where materials and air meet. When
sired, she optically and metaphorically punctures these surfaces
nd plumbs their strata and depths always in pursuit of deeper
eanings and potential spiritual associations. Wilson-Hammond's
oject titles such as *Intimate Communion* and *rtü* point towards,
r lack of a better word, metaphysical potentials to be gleaned
om above and below the earth's surface.

* * * * *

nd so I come full circle. This project started with Charlotte's robust udes where gravity created a skin of paint on female bodies that llude to rocks, hills and valleys in sensual landscapes. Gravity also ulled Charlotte's gaze away from her body, away from the horizon of er landscapes to the shadows she cast on the surfaces beneath her eet. Then came full inspection of the earth's surfaces followed by netaphoric mining expeditions beneath the visible, corporeal skin of he land and water.

The following thought is perhaps pure speculation on my part but believe that I am entitled to it. I believe that Charlotte makes little distinction between the surface of her own body and the surface that he tills for growing vegetables in her garden. Her nudes initially epresented her own fertile body. Her lost personal fertility, now as a grandmother, has been transferred to the fertility of the land. But not n a hokey, earth-goddess superficial display of unknowable ancient rituals and neo-hippie-chick grooviness. Rather, Charlotte indicates a deep respect for life, the earth, its materiality and its generative cycles. She also displays a deep respect for the power of metaphor and the transformative 'nature' of her artmaking practice. Her landscape is her extended skin, both physically and psychologically, her thighs but the strong foundation from where these emanate.

1981 - 1982

Personal History

- began traveling to Ottawa by train four times a year for national CARFAC meetings, made many new friends.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1981: Nova Scotia Department of Culture, Cultural Life Award.
- 1981: Board of Govenors, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
- 1982 -1986: National Board Member of CARFAC, became the National Vice-Representative.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1981: *Land and Sea: Viewpoints of Prince Edward Island*, organized by Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown, PEI; toured to: University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, NS; Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS; University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON.
- 1981: *Nudes*, group show, Robert Samuel Gallery, New York, NY.
- 1982: *Mirrorings*, group show, organized by Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS; toured to: Women in Focus, Vancouver, BC; Powerhouse, Montreal, PQ.
- 1982: *Gallery Artists*, group show, Gallery Dresdnere, Toronto, ON.

Goin' up the Road

John Murchie

Anne Murray, now one of Canada's most famous pop singers, grew up in a small rural Nova Scotian community. She was not yet famous in 1970 but soon would be. The singer was living in downtown Halifax having moved there from her birthplace in Springhill, the tragically famous mining town on the western edge of the Cobequid Mountains overlooking the innermost reaches of the Bay of Fundy. In a local newspaper article Murray confessed that "I work harder when I am in Toronto...when I am in Halifax, I fall into that slow-moving groove that Maritimers are in. But I love it...." For most Nova Scotians in 1970 Halifax was the big city to which, in fact, many had never traveled. It was a frighteningly large and essentially foreign place. For many it still is. Thirty some years later, small villages continue to be the norm rather more than not in Nova Scotia and, generally, in the region's four provinces.

Charlotte Wilson-Hammond did not emigrate to a foreign country a year later in 1971, but she did move to Nova Scotia from Ontario, to Clam Harbour from Toronto. And, Clam Harbour, although not far from Halifax, is no Halifax. Some perspective on that move may come with a recognition that in 1972, while more than 7.7 million people lived in Ontario, only 789,000 people were living in all of Nova Scotia; in fact, in that year more than 3.5 million people were living in the City of Toronto—and let's be clear about that—for every person living in Nova Scotia, there were four people living just in Toronto. Perhaps equally telling are the facts that just under half of the Nova Scotian population lived in small rural communities whereas in Ontario most people, more than 80%, lived in metropolitan centres.

It was, and still is and maybe always will be, a long road to go up from the likes of Toronto to the likes of Clam Harbour.

I first saw Nova Scotia four years before Wilson-Hammond in 1967. It then took more than eight hours of driving to get from Yarmouth to Halifax on the main traveled road, a two lane highway, which meandered along the North Atlantic coast through every brightly painted village whose existence was acknowledged by one or more large architectural structures, invariably a church and usually several. I later learned that the often garish house painting in contrast to the prevailing early fall, stony bleak grayness of the coastscape, was celebratory of the nation's hundredth birthday. Flags flew everywhere. The British Union Jack tended to outnumber the new Canadian flag, and even the American flag, although many houses flew all three and the provincial flag, too. By the time I reached Halifax I had gathered from this evidence that Canada was a country of deep political confusion with few roads, many not even paved. I was to discover that it was the Province's official tourist strategy to boast how few roads were paved and how easy it was to get off the beaten track.

1983 – 1984

Personal History

- **1984: Ken moved to Montreal to attend the National Theatre School.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **1983: half hour documentary about the artist on CBC Television.**
- **1983: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.**
- **1984 – 1985: Steering Committee and Founding Member, Nova Scotia Coalition of Arts and Culture.**
- **1984 – 1989: Board and Executive Member, Canadian Conference of the Arts.**

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- **1983: *Primary Flowers*, Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.**
- **1983: *Gallery Artists*, group show, Robertson Gallery, Ottawa, ON.**
- **1984: *Nova Scotian Artists*, group show, Albert White Gallery, Toronto, ON.**

Later, we often came to have afternoon tea at Murray's—and sometimes other meals since there were few eating choices in Halifax. Murray's was on the first floor of the Lord Nelson Hotel across from Halifax's Public Gardens at the city's main intersection of South Park Street and Spring Garden Road. It was from this vantage that I knew I really was in another place, and perhaps another time, when I witnessed something I had never before seen: a man successfully attempt a u-turn in this busiest intersection, right in the middle of rush hour. And it was from this same vantage that I witnessed the city's anti-Vietnam War march which the local newspapers had fretted about for weeks although they mostly paid little attention to the war itself. A large handful of adults and children quietly walked by with placards. There may have been 50 people. There probably were 25. Behind every corner of the march's route police in cars waited for the civil violence to erupt as it had so often in the United States. In Nova Scotia it did not. In fact, I lived in Halifax for more than a year before I realized that a sizable portion of the city's population was black. I read that in a book. I hardly ever saw a black person. As far as I can now recall, the only major change in those few years between my arrival and Charlotte Wilson-Hammond's was with the old Nova Scotia College of Art (NSCA). It became the new Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD).

From the vantage of 2002, the year 1971 does not impress me as long ago until I look at television footage, especially documentary news footage, of the day, and, too, if I look at the magazines of the day and newspapers. Any of the mediating representations of the time seem dated, seem to be of times long gone. This is, I suspect, one effect of the technological developments of those same years. The television footage seems not just of something before MTV, but of a black and white world almost before colour, the time when a magazine with the globally ambiguous title *The Mysterious East* could be, and was, published for three years between 1969 and 1972 in New Brunswick. It was an inexpensively printed, newsprint-based magazine of investigative reporting, a product of the expansive and expanding social mores, consciousness, and conscience of the 1960s.

Likely, I am not alone in having forgotten it. Scanning through the now fragile, crumbling pages of the magazine, trying to recall the "alternative" culture of those times, I came across an article in the January 1971 issue entitled "The Maritimes Remembered" by the anarchist writer and literary critic George Woodcock. The "mental image" he projects strikes me as correct in that it corresponds with my own remembrance and the perhaps "illusory" reflections, and as he suggests, may point the direction toward what exactly it is that drew, and continues to draw, people such as Charlotte Wilson-Hammond to Nova Scotia and particularly to its non-metropolitan communities:

> *My dominant mental image...is thus largely one of smallness; a world in miniature, with small hills, small trees, coastline bitten into small bays and inlets, tiny farms, minute houses, little towns that are real country towns in the European style instead of mere hick settlements like the lesser places of the west...a sense of high colour...of religious sectarianism...of the absence of the young and the hardness of age...a feeling, in spite of the shabbiness, in spite of a standard of living far lower than in the west, that life might be full and curious if only one knew how to penetrate it. The everlasting illusion of the traveler...it is really the present look and life of the Maritimes that stay in my mind as something so extraordinarily different from the West or the North or Ontario or Quebec; an earnest of how little the uniformities of The Global Village mean in terms of real existence.*

Woodcock was a traveller and possibly the day-to-day realities of actually living here might have cracked the illusions of his image? Maybe. Maybe not.

Almost ten years ago I drafted for an exhibition, but was then unable to use, some descriptive, perhaps interpretive, even metaphorical, observations about Nova Scotia. These still seem appropriate to my continued attempts to locate the cultural and

14. *Hand Shadows Rock #2* 1988

1985 – 1986

Personal History

- 1986: beloved cat Alex lost leg in trap, lead to series *Cats on Mats.*

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1985 – 2000: Board of Governors, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.
- 1985: Canada Council Explorations Grant.
- met Paula Fairfield and collaborated on the video *Still Point.*

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1986 – 1992: group shows with gallery artists, Studio 21, Halifax, NS.
- 1986: *Ars Sacra*, group show, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS.

social place that Nova Scotia, is as a home for many, especially for those who have come from away, yet stay to indeed make it a home, as did Charlotte Wilson-Hammond:

Nova Scotia is the most easterly land mass on the North American continent, the New World,that is, and closest therefore to the Old World. Explorers sought a way through the continent on the way elsewhere and looked for the water systems which would penetrate the land. Nova Scotia instead penetrated one of the earth's great oceans. It is a land neither here nor there—close to every place but somewhat away from all. It is on the leading edge of the New World but nowhere, really, and especially nowhere as the modern world has unfolded with its infrastructures of communication which seem to require no way stations, no resting places.

Nova Scotia is a minor spit of land. But for the narrow Chignecto Isthmus which connects it to the mainland, Nova Scotia would be an island among others. From above Nova Scotia seems to be escaping, or trying to escape, from the mainland. The forces of nature have it suspended and exposed but not wholly free. The tentative physical connection with the continent itself makes Nova Scotia neither an island unto itself nor fully a part of the whole. It is a wayward cul de sac in geological history and in the great drama of the western frontiers which dominates the histories and the mythologies of Canada and also, of course, the United States. As the land was overwhelmed with immigrants in pursuit of their manifest destinies, Nova Scotia was sought and then left behind as an entry point rather more than a destination.

Canada is defined as a nation by its vast border with the United States. Most Canadians live along it in some borderline status. Not unlike other provinces in the Atlantic region, Nova Scotia does not share that fate, yet, unlike those other provinces, Nova Scotia's geophysical connection with the mainland extends the centripetal pressures from the social centres along the U.S. border making Nova Scotia more ambiguously positioned, even torn, than it might otherwise be were it too an island. The parameters of national self-definition reach Nova Scotia but tenuously reach it.

Nova Scotia is finally an edge. It is a small land mass with a large coastline. The waters of the North Atlantic, of the Bay of Fundy, and of the St. Lawrence River, mediated by the Northumberland Strait, push and pull for hundreds of kilometers sculpting the edge in distinctly different ways. It is never possible to be in Nova Scotia and to be more than some 60 kilometers from its ocean's edge. It seems an island. It is of the mainland. One can walk, after all, to Vancouver, and even to Los Angeles. Yet to live in Nova Scotia is by definition to live close to an edge.

Nova Scotia is a terra firma. Its anomalous conditions seem to provide a ground for being which can be shaped by each woman and by each man. The only requirements are that one can live, or learn to live, with inclement weather, and rain, and cold blowing rain, almost snow, and with the knowledge that most of the world will not remember what time of day it is where you live.

The 1993 exhibition was organized by Mary Sparling, then Director of the Art Gallery at Mount Saint Vincent University, and, in fact, a forthright supporter of Charlotte Wilson-Hammond as well as, to her great credit, an active supporter more generally of the work of the region's usually neglected women artists. While she recognized the roles women artists had played in the region's cultural development, Sparling had also noted the essential cultural importance of the many immigrant artists in Nova Scotia and particularly the five included in the exhibition *Terra Firma*.

All but one of the five immigrant artists in that exhibition were male; all came to Nova Scotia from the United States; and all were associated with Halifax's Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Those facts—male, United States, Halifax and its famous art school—rather dominated by 1972 the small post-1967 Nova Scotian art world which Charlotte Wilson-Hammond entered with her move from Toronto; an art world which up through the

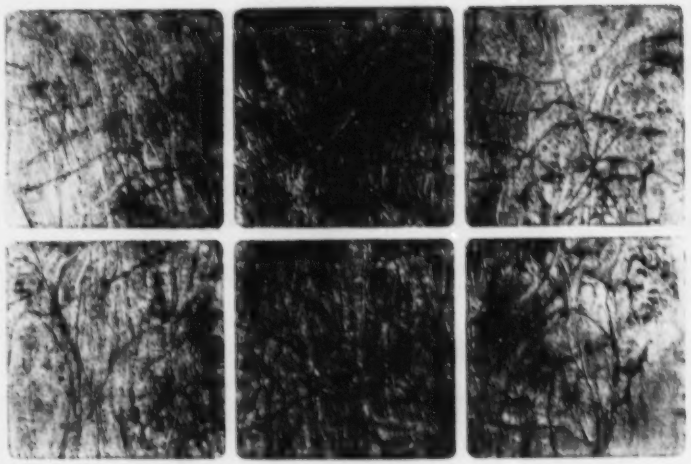
1987 – 1988

Personal History	Education and selected related professional activities		Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects
• 1987: first acting experience in *Life Classes*. • 1987: Thea leaves for Europe, serious 'empty-nest syndrome.'	• 1987 – 1988: *Still Point*, a 12 minute video produced with Paula Fairfield, screened at: Atlantic Film Festival, Halifax, NS; Feminism and Art Conference, Toronto, ON; Great George Street Gallery, Charlottetown, PEI; Femmes en Focus, Video Festival, Moncton, NB; Onzieme Festival Femmes et Vieux, Quebec City, PQ; 4th International Festival of Film and	Video by Women, Montreal, PQ; Centre for Art Tapes, Halifax, NS.	• 1987: *Cats on Mats*, Studio 21, Halifax, NS. • 1987: *Selections from the Permanent Collection*, group show, Dalhousie University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS. • 1988: *Recent Works*, Studio 21, Halifax, NS. • 1988: *Selections from the Permanent Collection*, group show, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS.

ntennial celebrations in 1967 had been dominated by women — least numerically — and by the influences of a genteel British lonial culture which remained relatively, indeed adamantly, olated from the modernist's world. In 1967 the then Nova Scotia llege of Art was not a significant cultural force. Those facts had plosively changed during the four years before Wilson-ammond's arrival. She found a home on the land and away from e great and growing concentrations of people which do indeed fine quite decidedly the global world. However, she was not ale, she was not from the United States, and she chose to live utside of Halifax. Those facts would make entry into the art mmunity now dominated in many respects by the newly vigorated art college a slow and tenuous matter for a woman nd a painter, even one as little isolated as Wilson-Hammond om the modernist's world.

Historically, Nova Scotian painters had typically been mild annered and ever observant of visual decorum. They were an ncritical expression of British garrison outport culture. For better r worse, they were colonialists. The new esprit de corps at NSCAD as dominated by trade winds of an international art world often ell weathered by its reception in New York City. The NSCAD faculty ay themselves have also been colonialists but of a vastly different uthority. Wilson-Hammond was neither. Her art was hardly genteel r decorus. It was often large, raw, expressive, emphatic and florid ith a modernist's consideration of the materiality of the process of isual production. Nor, however, was her art invested with the gour of the new conceptual authority with its social and moral nperatives which NSCAD advanced. Furthermore, her authorities ere not so much in the United Kingdom or in New York but sided in Toronto: Graham Coughtry, Dennis Burton, Robert Markel, Gershon Iskowitz, to name a few. From this new place, lam Harbour, she pretty much had to make her own way.

George Woodcock's sense of the essential "smallness" of the hings of this place Nova Scotia, of eastern Canada, the smallness f the place itself, does correspond to my experience. Charlotte Wilson-Hammond painted large works of nudes when she was in Toronto and when she first arrived in Nova Scotia. Within a short time she would be painting large landscapes which when placed side by side with the nudes can easily be seen to have been made by the same artist with the same ambitions of monumentality. It is really only in the 1990s — two decades after her arrival in Clam Harbour — that Wilson-Hammond's work has taken on the aspect of intimacy wherein values such as delicacy and tenderness may prevail: the muted tones of colour of a world up close, an everyday world, and right at the front door. Perhaps it is only a matter of the fact that we don't have to go far from home to go up a road on a long journey once a home is found? Still, any real journey takes time.



19. *The Space Between* 1994

989 – 1990

Personal History

- 1989: step-father died of brain tumour while visiting in Clam Harbour.
- 1990: in spite of major fear of flying, traveled with Gordon to England and Ireland to visit Thea.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1989: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.
- 1989: panelist for *Creating Creators*, Canadian Conference for the Arts, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
- 1990: opening remarks for *Form and Figure*, Dalhousie Art Gallery.
- 1990: discussed *Life Classes* with Bill MacGillivray, Dalhousie Art Gallery.
- 1990: presented "A Way of Seeing," lecture at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
- 1990 – 1992: Board of Directors, VisArt Copyright Inc.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1990: *Naked/Nude*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS.
- 1990: *Cats*, group show, New Art Space, Toronto, ON.
- 1990: *Art for Intimate Places*, group show, Studio 21, Halifax, NS.

SARAH HOLLENBERG

Born at the proverbial crest of feminism's second wave (1976), I was too young to bear conscious witness to the heroism of my mother's generation—the enormous difference they made to the political, professional, and domestic climate of North American culture in the 1970's. Nor was I quite ready to catch on to the depth and complexity of the critical reevaluations of their position and strategies that were instigated in the '80s and '90s by following generations. I was too young when these things happened to conduct any sort of concurrent analysis of the development of feminism. Instead, like my peers, I grew up with it. Charlotte Wilson-Hammond's practice as an artist spans that history, and the pattern of its quiet ingestion and subsequent imaging of massive social change is familiar.

These paintings and drawings are laden with references to the matriarch whose image saturated the thinking and dialogue of a generation of women who sought to acknowledge motherhood as something of central, rather than ancillary, cultural importance. The earth mother, the prehistorical matriarch, offered a concept of motherhood outside of contemporary culture and the limitations of patriarchy. The hills and hollows that Charlotte paints onto the female body, the deep cracks and fatty swells worked into the earth, act as a visual and conceptual umbilicus connecting the essential woman to the the essential earth.

Geography and gender, figure and landscape. These things go way, way back, but their meaning has changed, enormously, suddenly, over the three decades that these works were produced. If my unpacking of histories is a little heavy handed, it is only to build a bridge of sorts over an inevitable generational gap. I flip through these histories like cue cards, like indexes, laying out for myself a path by which to navigate this body of work.

* * * * *

The sexualization of geographical territories is an old strategy. The enormous colonial project of Europe's most powerful nations was economic and military at heart, but was enabled by the conceptual feminization of non European geographies. Virgin territories all over the globe waited, meek, stupid, and hungry for the civilizing hand of Man, as virgin brides waited, meek, stupid, and hungry for the civilizing hands of men.

Most of us are familiar with certain repetitive formations in Western histories, whether histories of gender relations or of nations. We all know what the term husband refers to, likewise colonizer, how they may be like in some ways. I just want to point out now, at the beginning, this particular tendency, one which must inflect any considered reading of the geographies of our landscapes and our bodies.

8 CHARLOTTE WILSON-HAMMOND

991 - 1992

Personal History

- 1991: acquired wonderful Great Pyrene's puppy named 'Parsnip.'

Education and selected related professional activities

- 1992: included in *By a Lady: Three Centuries of Canadian Women Artists*, written by Maria Tippett.
- 1991: Advisory Committee for Young Art Exhibit, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1991: *A Chairfull of Christmas*, group show, Studio 21, Halifax, NS.
- 1992: *Contemporary Drawing Collection*, group show, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1992 – 1993: *Selections from the Permanent Collection*, group show, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS.

* * * * *

The imaging of landscapes is closely tied to colonial histories
d attitudes. A landscape painting hung on the wall of a
gionally representative art gallery, such as the AGNS, is often
ewed as apolitical, ahistorical. Landscape paintings offer visual
easure, a contemplative moment, an easily digested lesson in
e particularities and variety of a specific terrain. A landscape
inting however, *is* a political and historical object. The
ndscapes selected for exhibition in an institution that aims to
fer regional representation, such as the AGNS, offer a selected
sion of place, culture, and the relationship of culture to nature.
is happens all over the world, has happened for centuries. In
ova Scotia we see sea scapes, in Ontario the piney forest
lderness of the Group of Seven. For centuries landscape painting
s served the needs of national and regional identities, identities
nich required rapid production and validation in the New World.

Land and women's bodies have, on a frequent enough basis
at the behavior could be termed habitual, been handled as
operty to be owned and used (like all things "natural") at an
wners discretion. Generally their use was pedestrian,
remarkable, based in economic necessity. At times it was brutal.
n occasion, this relationship of ownership was idealized,
autified in cultural products. Painting in particular, has offered a
enitude of representations of women's bodies and tracts of land,
owners. Property takes on a greater value when it becomes part
cultural discourse, it takes on a value greater than the sum of
s worth in hard currency. Property becomes a deciding factor in
e determination of social relations.

Feminists in the 60s and 70s objected strongly to this self-
rpetuating imbalance of power.[1] Determined to take the imaging
women into their own hands, they split open traditional notions
transgression, employing countless innovative strategies to call
tention to and to replace the hegemonic power of patriarchal
sion within cultural discourse and production. The struggle to expose and eliminate degrading or generalizing images of women in the media and in art was a public one, accompanied and followed by the less sensational, if more historically relevant (and deeply problematic) process, of re-imaging woman.

* * * * *

So we have these histories: of geographies, of bodies, of paintings and cultural commodities and revolutions.

Charlotte's practice follows this history and may be read—with the aggressively interpretive stance of the next generation seeking a coherent history—as containing within its body the indices of social change, as well as those of an individual life.

* * * * *

The early nudes *(Nude #1 - #5)* are solid and fertile in a way often associated with the "woman painter."[2] They are discussed in terms of their strength—as if their strength is their motive, their politic. But perhaps in this case their strength is secondary, a red herring. They still follow the rules in their imaging of the female nude, providing a body that is lush, fecund, sexy—all of the things a reclining female should be—including passive. She must lie still if she is to painted, the entire history of the nude demands stillness, even if she does look back out at you (and Manet's brazen *Olympia* did that a century ago, besides). It is not their chunky hips that give them away, that suggest the burgeoning of a new way of imagining women, outside the demands and desires of patriarchal gendering. To my eye (that of a painter and a younger feminist), it is instead the use of a formal strategy of refusal that identifies these as

21. *Watercolour #1* 1996

1 Of course this dissatisfaction with the objectification of women does go back much farther than the last quarter of the twentieth century. In 1914, with a fury unparalleled by most contemporary feminists, a suffragette attacked Velazquez's creamy *Venus at Her Mirror*, in London's National Gallery, with a hatchet that she had hidden in her muff.

993 – 1994

Personal History

- **1993: leg smashed by ram in barnyard.**
- **1993: younger brother died of heart attack in Toronto.**
- **1994 – present: began tai chi every day at Clam Harbour Beach, major life change.**
- **1994 – present: started playing the harp, lessons with Sandy Moore.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **1993: panelist for *Place of Figure in Contemporary Art*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.**
- **1994: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.**

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- **1993: *25th Anniversary Collection*, group show, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Halifax, NS.**
- **1994: *Far and Wide*, Visual Arts Nova Scotia bi-annual group exhibition, Dartmouth Heritage Museum, Halifax, NS.**

images that seek new ways of representing and reading the female nude, the naked female body.

The lines of paint that run down these bodies/canvases may be read as a reference to the viscerality of the body, it's aforementioned fecundity, but I'd rather turn for now, from the symbolic to the optical, the material. These drips refuse the viewer entry. There is no access here, you may not imagine yourself in the embrace of an otherwise highly sexualized body. These drips do more than reference the effluvia of the female body, or the influence of American abstraction on Canadian figure painters—they are a set of bars. Instead of denying the eroticism of objectification, these works employ the reigning formal ideologies of their time to lessen their accessibility. Rendered flat, the overt materiality of these paintings disclose the fiction of their fleshy subjects. Charlotte's treatment of the landscape in the *Clam Harbour Collection* also employs this refusal of illusion, and therefore of conceptual conquest.

But refusal can only go so far. Once we're satisfied that "you mustn't" has been heard, we have to figure out what to replace it with. What relationship can we have to a practice of image making that is saturated with histories we now view as corrupt? The fear that the female body simply cannot be used without falling into objectification has made even self representation dangerous.[3] But many artists, rather than abandon the female body as subject, have tried to find a way to image the body, the world, without resorting to the old hierarchies of ownership and conquest.

Hammond, in her *Shadow/Rock* drawings, begins her own reconceptualisation of the complex relationships between the female body, the land it occupies, and the imagery that gives them both a place in culture.[4] Rather than attempt to eliminate the erotic terms in which these objects had previously been spoken, Hammond goes back to an association between the female body and the land that is somehow outside of culture. She tries to work around it, to find a way to be with the land, and to image a relationship that is not about power, or ownership, or anyone else's pleasure. This is a highly sexualized relationship yes, but rather than conquer or describe, the artist aims to become. In these works Wilson-Hammond draws the light touch of a shadow, that which leaves no mark on the landscape, that which passes, touching, probing, exploring without contact the cracks in the earth, the featherweight touch of Irigaray's two lips taken out to the land.[5]

This relationship does, as Hammond's practice progresses, become more symbolic than literal. The collage works of *rtü* make the surfaces of the worked images visceral material analogues of body and land. The most recent works, the water paintings, go a step further, drawing parallels between the sense of deep water, representable only through a familiar iconography of colour and movement, and a metaphysical imaging of abstractly orgasmic female sexuality. These works cease to search for either visual or somatic representation of the age-old conceptual co-mingling of earth and female flesh, as previous works had, and seek instead to employ the most eternal qualities of the earth's matter to represent a spiritual imaging of female pleasure.

It is this—the image of female pleasure, and pleasure in the abstractly feminine that gives this collection of work its tone. The conception of the relationship between earth and woman visible in Hammond-Wilson's works may be read as part of an age old lineage of matriarchal imagery that is finally resurfacing after centuries of oppression. Or it may be interpreted as a reflection of feminism's inevitable adoption and tactical perversion of the patriarchal strategy of infantilizing women by associating them with the natural, rather than the civilized, world. Whatever historical model I apply to these works, I first see and recognize the pleasures that they identify in the development of an egalitarian relationship between land, body, and the act of representation.

2 The female figures painted by Artemisia Gentileschi, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Suzanne Valadon and Alice Neel are often described in terms of their physicality, strength, or monumentality.

3 In "No Essential Femininity A Conversation between Mary Kelly and Paul Smith," Mary Kelly—a feminist artist who gained enormous notoriety in the early 1980s for her unprecedented examination of the psychology of motherhood—states that"...when the image of the woman is used in a work of art, that is, when her body or person is given as signifier, it becomes extremely problematic. Most women artists who have presented themselves in some way, visibly, in their work have been unable to find the kind of distancing devices which would cut across the predominant representations of woman as object of the look, or that would question the notion of femininity as a pregiven entity." The interview was initiated during the exhibition of *Post-Partum Document* at the Anna Leonowens Gallery, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 1981. In *Imaging Desire*, M. Kelly, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1996. Interview originally published in *Parachute*, no. 26.

1995 - 1996

Personal History

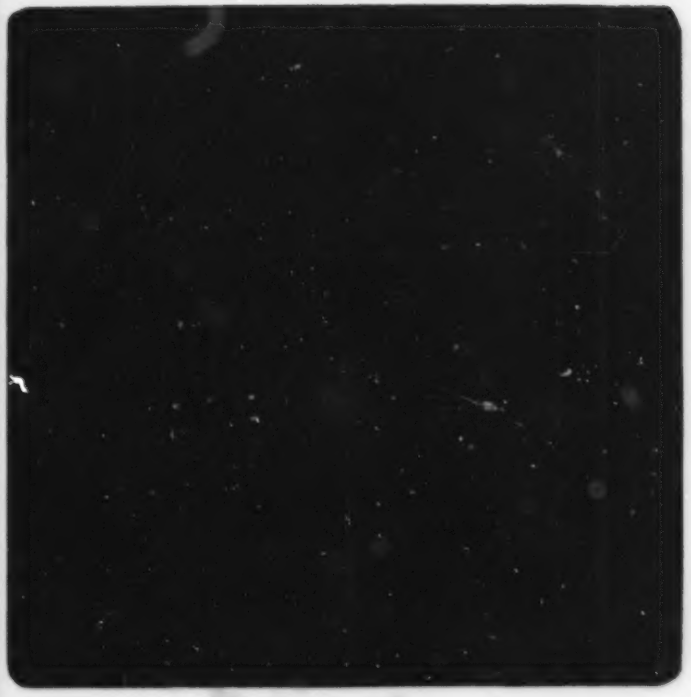
- 1995: Geoff accepted for studies at NSCAD.
- 1996: took train with Gordon across Canada, bought used Volkswagen 'Golf' in British Columbia and drove back to Nova Scotia.

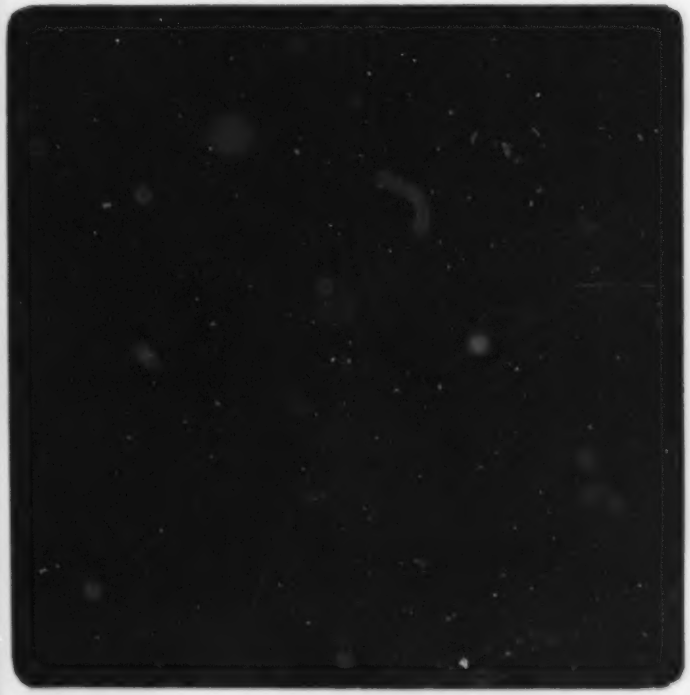
Education and selected related professional activities

- 1995: featured on *The Creators*, Women's Television Network.
- 1995: featured on *Artists Clips*, Bravo! Television Network.
- 1995: Nova Scotia Department of Culture Project Grant.
- 1996: included in *World Enough in Time: Conversations with Canadian Women* written by Andrea Fawcette.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 1995: *Intimate Communion*, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1995: *Collective Viewing*, group show, Saint Mary's University Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.
- 1996: *Body Language: Contemporary Figure Work*, group show, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.



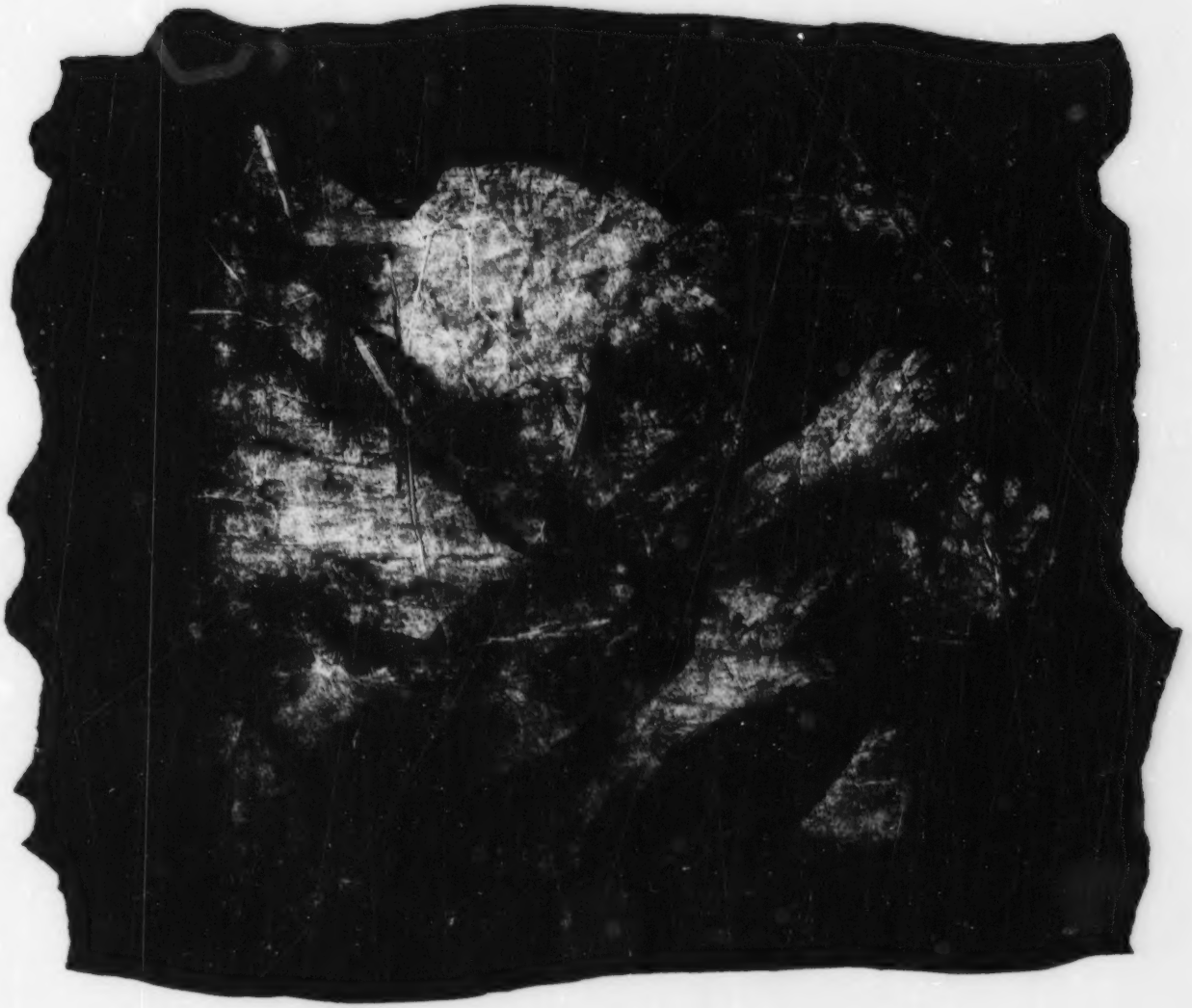


4 It is interesting to note that the desire to reconnect with nature as a way to circumvent the effects and powers of a patriarchal society is in many ways a simple redirection of the ideological position which stated that women/land/animals, as part of "nature" were automatically inferior and subject to men/culture.

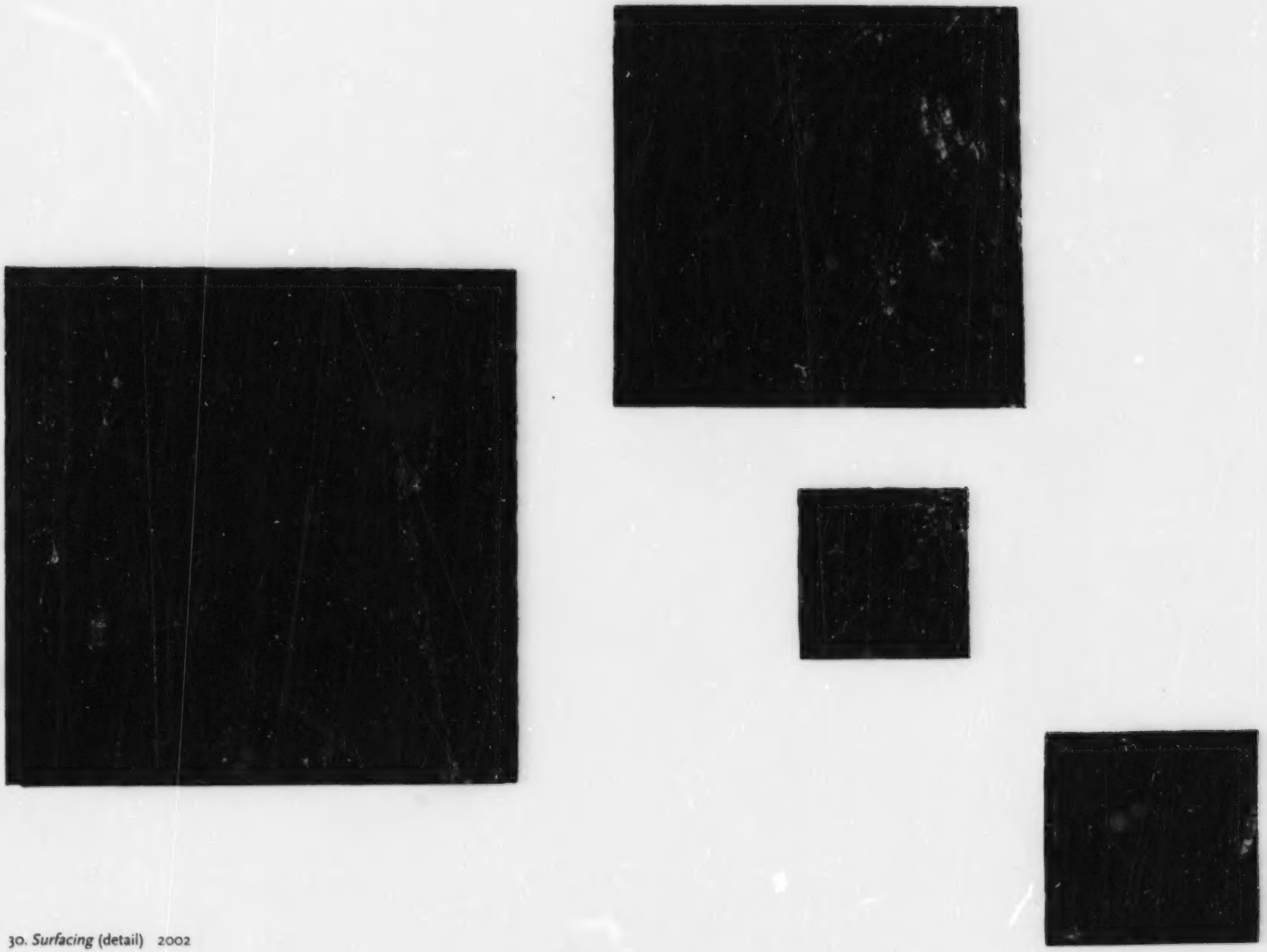
5 In 1977, in *This Sex Which is Not One*, French feminist Luce Irigaray describes female sexuality in terms of "...two lips which embrace continually. Thus, within herself she is already two—but not divisible into ones—who stimulate each other." in in her arguments against the phallic imagining of sexuality common to psychoanalytic theory of the time. p 100 of *New French Feminisms* eds. E. Marks and I. de Courtivron. 1981, New York.

18 *Nature's Blood* 1991

25. *Untitled* 1997



29. *Untitled* 1999



30. *Surfacing* (detail) 2002

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1995 "The Creators." Women's Television Network.

1995 "Artist Clips." Bravo! Television Network.

1983 "Portrait of the Maritimes: Charlotte Wilson-Hammond." Janet P Smith, producer, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

997 – 1998

Personal History

- **1997: Thea's horse 'Jody' died after illness.**
- **1997: purchased 'Jacob' a Fiord Horse.**
- **1997: injured neck, was bed ridden for months, nerve damage to hand, long period of convalescence and physio-therapy.**
- **1997: Thea married Chris Henkelmann in Clam Harbour.**
- **1998: became grandmother to Thea and Chris' daughter Rowan.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **1997: nominated for Portia White award.**
- **1998: Nova Scotia Arts Council Creation grant and Canada Council 'A' Grant.**

List of Works in Exhibition

Measurements in centimetres, height precedes width.
All works are collection of the artist unless otherwise noted.

Female Nudes

1. *Nude #1* 1969-72
   oil on canvas
   122.0 x 122.0

2. *Nude #2* 1969-72
   oil on canvas
   153.0 x 153.0
   collection of Nova Scotia Art Bank, Halifax, NS

3. *Nude #5* 1969 - 72
   oil on canvas
   122.0 x 183.0
   collection of Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS

Clam Harbour Collection

4. *Beach Grass* 1976
   oil on canvas
   175.3 x 246.4
   collection of Atlantex, Chezzetcook, NS

5. *Sunset (Clam Harbour Beach)*
   1976
   oil on canvas
   162.5 x 281.9

6. *Sunset (Doctor's Hill)* 1976
   oil on canvas
   175.3 x 246.4
   collection of Nova Scotia Art Bank, Halifax, NS

Land and Sea - Viewpoints of Prince Edward Island

7. *Diamond Field* 1980
   oil on canvas
   144.8 x 182.8
   collection of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS

8. *Dunes #2* 1980
   oil on canvas
   106.8 x 190.6
   collection of Confederation Centre Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown. PEI

9. *Field #3 (Potato Field)* 1980
   oil on canvas
   88.0 x 123.0

10. *Field #4* 1980
    oil on canvas
    87.0 x 95.8
    collection of Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

Dune Clam Harbour Series

11. *Dune Clam Harbour #1* 1981
    oil on canvas
    91.0 x 122.0

12. *Dune Clam Harbour #4* 1981
    oil on canvas
    91.0 x 122.0
    collection of Marcus Jones, Halifax, NS

Shadow/Rock Series

13. *Hand Shadows Rock #1* 1988
    coloured pencil on paper
    76.3 x 55.9
    collection of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS

14. *Hand Shadows Rock #2* 1988
    coloured pencil on paper
    76.3 x 55.9

15. *Naked Shadow Rock #1* 1988
    coloured pencil on paper
    177.9 x 123.3
    collection of Art Gallery of Nova Scotia

16. *Shadows Rock Lichens* 1988
    coloured pencil on paper
    124.0 x 120.5

Intimate Communion

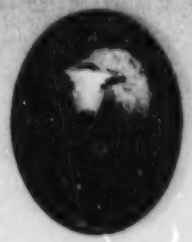
17. *In The Beginning* 1991 - 92
    Japanese paper, found organic material, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on panels
    9 panels, 125.0 x 125.0 installed
    collection of Geoff Harrington, Halifax, NS

18. *Nature's Blood* 1993
    Japanese paper, found organic material, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on panels
    4 panels, 190.0 x 190.0 installed
    collection of Ken Wilson Harrington, New York, NY

19. *The Space Between* 1994
    Japanese paper, found organic material, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on panels
    6 panels, 197.0 x 295.0 installed
    collection of Atlantex, Chezzetcook, NS

20. *Tapestry* 1995
    Japanese paper, found organic material, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on panels
    16 panels, 165.0 x 165.0 installed
    collection of Thea Wilson-Hammond and Chris Henkelmann, Clam Harbour, NS

1999 – 2000



Personal History

- **1999: 20th anniversary of Atlantex. Gordon retires but opens home office for Middlepoint Consulting.**
- **1999: stopped smoking cigarettes after 44 years of two packs a day habit, major physical and psychological hurdles to overcome.**
- **2000: mother moved to Halifax from Ontario.**
- **2000: Thea and Chris built new house on adjacent property.**
- **2000: sold horse 'Jacob.'**
- **2000: Ken bought house in Clam Harbour with three friends.**

Education and selected related professional activities

- **1999 – 2000: nominated for Portia White award.**
- **1999: member of Awards Committee, Nova Scotia Talent Trust.**
- **2000 – present: Honourary Member, Board of Governors, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.**
- **2000 – present: Board member exofficio, Visual Arts Nova Scotia.**

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- **1999: *A Century of Canadian Drawing*, group show, Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS.**
- **2000: *rti*, ArtsPlace, Annapolis Royal, NS; Saint Francis Xavier University Art Gallery, Antigonish, NS.**
- **2000: *Millennium Flags*, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS.**

Watercolours

21. *Watercolour #1* 1996
watercolour on paper
24.8 x 17.2

22. *Wintergarden* 1996
watercolour on paper
20.3 x 21.0
collection of Gary Foshay, Halifax, NS

23. *Wintergarden #3* 1996
watercolour on paper
21.0 x 18.0
collection of Gary Foshay, Halifax, NS

RTÜ

24. *Untitled* 1997
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
77.0 x 107.0

25. *Untitled* 1997
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
77.0 x 97.0

26. *Untitled* 1998
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
88.0 x 110.0

27. *Untitled* 1999
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
89.0 x 111.0

28. *Untitled* 1999
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
89.0 x 111.0

29. *Untitled* 1999
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint
89.0 x 111.0

New Work

30. *Surfacing* 2002
15 panels installed in variable configurations
Japanese paper, ink, acrylic gloss medium and oil paint on canvas
largest panel: 122.0 x 122.0
smallest panel: 25.5 x 25.5

2001 – 2002

Personal History

- 2001: Ken moved to New York City, performs in solo play Off-Broadway.
- 2001: purchased two horses with Thea.
- 2001: Geoff underwent major back surgery and period of convalescence.
- 2001: huge celebration for 60th birthday and 30th anniversary of life in Clam Harbour.
- 2002: 'Coco' the new horse unexpectedly produced a new colt.
- 2002: second granddaughter, Miko Emily, is born.

Education and selected related professional activities

- 2001: nominated for Portia White award.
- 2001 – present: Board of Directors, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia as representative of Visual Arts Nova Scotia.
- 2002 – present: Board of Govenors, Nova Scotia Talent Trust.

Selected Exhibitions, Commissions and Projects

- 2001: *rtü*, Alderney Landing, Dartmouth, NS.
- 2001: *VANS Eastern Shore*, Alderney Gate Gallery, Dartmouth, NS.

Postscript

I was born in London, Ontario, but attained a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I moved permanently to Toronto in 1978, living in the Queen Street West district. In 1991, I followed my partner, Jayne Wark, to Halifax, where she had secured a teaching job at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. I had the good fortune of also being hired at NSCAD and have been affiliated with the Anna Leonowens Gallery since 1992, and have also worked on numerous contract curatorial projects for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. I am the father of two daughters and maintain a studio and exhibition practice.

I have always been intrigued by Charlotte's work but also by her history as an artist. In many ways, my history echoes hers in terms of experiencing an early professional life in Toronto before relocating to Nova Scotia. I also relate to Charlotte's ability to juggle her studio practice with the demands of parenting combined with added layers of, for lack of a better word, 'community service' through activities on the boards of various cultural organizations. Charlotte's commitment to her practice, her community and ultimately, her family, have been inspiring to me. And through all of this, she has maintained a wonderful sense of humour. I thank Charlotte for the many hours spent giggling on the phone while trying to conduct 'serious' curatorial business.

—PD